

THE
PRISONER'S FRIEND;
OR
LETTERS

TO THE
CONDEMNED.

"Let the fighting of the Prisoner come before Thee, according to the greatness of thy Power. Preserve thou them that are appointed to die." Plal. lxxix. 11.

"Turn ye to the Strong hold, ye prisoners of Hope." Zech. ix. 12.

"Oh 'tis a Godlike privilege to save,
And he that scorns it, is himself a slave.
Inform his mind, one flash of heav'nly day
Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away."
COWPER.

BY THE
Rev. JAMES EDWARDS,

TO WHICH IS ADDED
A COPY OF A LETTER,
From a Physician in London, to the late Dr. Dodd, when he was
under Sentence of Death.

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1799

PRISONER'S FRIEND;
P R E F A C E.

The following Letters are written
as a guide to the personal con-
duct of the Prisoner's Friend.
The Prisoner's Friend should be
a person of good character and
of good standing in the community.

The Author would not have
been so employed if he had
not been a person of good
character and of good standing
in the community. He has
been employed for some
time by the Prisoners' Friend
Society, and has been
employed in the same
position for some time.
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P R E F A C E.

THE following Letters are written as a Substitute for personal converse, where persons of serious character, and Evangelical sentiment, can have no access to the condemned cell.

The Author, would not have presumed to employ his Pen, had he known of any Publication that fully accorded with his wishes. He has indeed some years ago, seen some Sermons published by the late Rev. David Edwards of Ipswich, which were preached by that eminent Servant of Christ to Malefactors; but however excellent those Sermons may be, he conceives their Bulk, and Price, impede their circulation, and prevent them from finding their way to the prison.

The object of his desire, was a small Treatise suitable to the situation of a poor Creature under Sentence of Death, and published at a low price; so written, as to enter into the spirit of the Prisoner's views and feelings. As this mode gives opportunity to expose the danger of those subterfuges to which persons of this description flee; and also to exhibit as it were, at one view, those fundamental Truths, to know, and believe which, is essential to Salvation. How far he has succeeded in his attempt, is not for him to determine.

Criticism itself, will not expect an apology for a Work of this nature, except it be for defects of composition; but even these will be considered as atoned for by purity of motive, and the glorious truths it contains:—Motives, which led a *Howard* to sacrifice his life in a dungeon; and the *Son of God* to expire on a Cross:—Truths, for which Martyrs have bled; and by which souls are saved from everlasting Death;—Truths, which the writer is not ashamed

P R E F A C E.

ashamed to say, are all his support,
and all his glory.

These *Epistles*, though primarily addressed to the condemned, are by no means unsuitable to every one within the walls of a prison; Yea, they are strongly recommended to all, without the exception of an Individual, whatever be their character, or situation in life, who have Souls to be saved, and are concerned for their welfare. Nor will the *Infidel* of the Day find them an unseasonable Antidote against that Poison by which his Soul is threatened with Eternal Death.

To the Humane and Compassionate, this small expression of benevolence is most respectfully Dedicated. The honour of their sanction is particularly requested. Persons, whose bowels yearn over the miseries of their Fellow-Creatures,—who feel it the highest gratification to attempt their relief;—and who have long wished for something of this kind, to put into the hand of a Sinner launching into Eternity;—are now

A 3 presented

presented with the accomplishment
of their wish.

The Author has only to add—May
the Blessing of God succeed his
Efforts! and his Name shall have all
the Praise.

Wilton,

January 1, 1799.

LETTER I.

My poor Fellow-Sinner,

TO visit you in person, would be attended with no small sacrifice of feeling: for who can be a witness to such misery as that of which you are the subject, without feelings of the most painful kind? But great as that sacrifice may be, I should most readily embrace the opportunity of an interview with you, could I obtain it. I should then deem it my duty, to submit to your consideration those things, which I consider as essential to your Salvation; and with you to call upon him, who alone is able to save to the uttermost. Of this interview I am deprived. I have thought therefore of transmitting you a few lines as its substitute. May the blessing of God attend them! Who can tell! You may have cause to be thankful for them even in Death. I beseech you to give them attentive reading, for they are your life. And Oh! that the Spirit of God may explain, and apply their important truths for his glory, and your everlasting good.

You are indeed of all men the most miserable.

ferable. Your sinful conduct has brought you into this unhappy condition. You have lately been tried, by God and your Country; and by them you have been found guilty of the offence, for which you are condemned to die. You are now looking forward to that dismal morning, when you are to be made a dreadful spectacle to the universe.

The Crime which you have committed, is a violation of the law of Man. This is not all; It is a transgression of the law of God. "Thou shalt not Steal. Thou shalt not commit Adultery. Thou shalt not kill."* is the command of your Maker as it is of your Sovereign. But what has been your conduct? You have plundered your neighbour:—You have gratified your lust:—You have attempted the life of your fellow-creature;—in so doing you have broken that law which is divine, as you have that which is human. What is the consequence? You are condemned by the one, as you are by the other. The one has already thundered its dreadful sentence in your ears.—"You are to be taken whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution, and there you are to be hanged by the neck until you are dead." The other rolls in more tremendous peals:—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in

* Exod. xx. ver. 13 to 15.

in all things written in the Book of the law to do them.* This is but a small preface of the more terrible one which still awaits you:—"Depart from me ye cursed into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels."†

Oh what a situation are you in! A criminal condemned! Condemned Soul and Body! Condemned by God and Man! Condemned to die a painful Death on Earth, and a more miserable one in Hell!

I do not mean to insult you by ungenerous reflection; neither do I wish to create unnecessary alarm; but I must act the part of a Friend, who compassionates your case, and who manifests his friendship by his faithfulness. Bear with me when I tell you, that you in are the utmost danger, and I fear you know it not;—that your precious soul is *lost*;—and dying as you are, I fear it will be *lost for ever*. Your sin is the ruin of your Soul, as it is of your Body: It as much exposes you to the Torments of Hell, as it does to the horrors of a gallows. You are indeed ruined and undone. Oh what a state! What will you do? What can you do? Something must be done, and that speedily, or you are undone, for ever.

Seriously reflect on what you now are, and what you soon will be. Endeavour to see things as they exist. Give yourself no rest,

* Deut. xxvii. 26.

† Matt. xxv. 41.

rest, until you have formed just sentiments of your present situation; and what in all probability it will be in the world to come. You will hear from me again.

I am

Your compassionate
and Faithful Friend.

LETTER II.

THE Surgeon's probe at all times is unwelcome to the bleeding wound; yet there are seasons when it is indispensibly necessary. It is not the pleasure of the patient, but his benefit, which is the great object of surgical attention.

You will think it strange, though I assure you it is true: I am afraid my last has not created that pain I could have wished. I cannot refrain from the second attempt. I am exceedingly desirous of impressing your mind with the truth. I think I see a bandage before your eyes which I wish to remove;-- A scene to which I must direct your views: Distressing as it may be, suffer me to draw aside the curtain, and point you to the gloomy object. Behold then the awful
day

day of your death is arrived!—A messenger is sent to your dungeon, and informs you, “This day you are to die.”—The officer of Justice makes demand of your body—You are delivered in solemn form—Your fetters are unriveted—You are guarded to the place of execution—Thousands are assembled to witness your sufferings—The executioner makes his appearance—The instrument of death is placed round your neck—Your attendants are withdrawn—A few moments respite are allotted you—The time is expired—The signal is given—Your standing gives way—You are plunged into all the unknown agonies of death. But see new scenes; and far more solemn—The union formed between soul and body is now dissolved—The one is rent asunder from the other—The body left with all its expressions of vice and woe, to be thrown into some hole, there to putrify and feed worms; to be mangled and cut to pieces by the hand of the surgeon; or to be hanged upon the gibbet, as a monument of the evil of Sin, and of the Justice of God.—The soul quitting her habitation, looks around and finds herself in Eternity—Myriads of spirits surround her—She stands before her Judge—her guilt is proved—her sentence is passed—her doom is fixed—Devils seize her—Hell yawns to receive her—bound with chains of adamant, she is dragged to the
burning

burning lake---She shrieks for help, but shrieks in vain: there is no heart to pity, no hand to help---All her struggles though violent are fruitless---forced into the horrid gulph, she takes up her miserable, her everlasting abode with devils and damned spirits. Ah! what a scene! could you see it as it is, it would make your knees smite, the one against the other.---It would petrify your soul with horror.---It would drive you distracted.

This is but a faint sketch of what is before you: the one thousandth part cannot be told. An impenetrable gloom conceals objects far more dreadful than the eye hath seen, or the ear hath heard, or the heart can conceive. Death alone can remove the veil, and exhibit in their true colours, the flames of Hell and the blifs of Paradise.

Here make a pause; and ask yourself, "Do I stand prepared for all the solemnities of the Invisible World? Can I bear the wreck of Nature, and the exchange of Worlds? Have I cause for courage, in view of my supreme Judge, and his awful tribunal? Can I hope all is well?---All will be well?" With these important questions I leave you at present, and subscribe myself,

Yours, as before.

LETTER

LETTER III.

LOVE to your soul leads me to suspect all is not right. I am afraid there are certain refuges, to which you betake yourself; where alas! you will find the utmost danger instead of safety. I propose to follow you into these strong holds---to convince you they will deceive you---that you must relinquish them; and stand on different ground from what you do at present.

I then begin my pursuit; and I find you already in your entrenchments. I think I hear you say, "I thank God, I am not afraid to die---I have often faced Danger--- Besides, I can die but once---Death is the common lot of all---It is only a momentary struggle, and there is an end of my existence---I have no faith in the doctrine of a future state---I do not believe I shall exist after this life; however, if I should, I have no doubt of my future welfare".

Let us attend for a moment, to each of these observations. You say, you have often faced danger without fear.---Have you indeed done so, in time that is past? Does it follow you will be fearless now, when you see death presented to you in all its horrid form? When it will assume more than its ghastly visage? Is there nothing in

its tremendous apparatus, that will abate your courage think you? Is there nothing in the chains--the halter--the gibbet--the executioner---to create alarm? To meet death on a bed of disease is natural; or in a field of battle is deemed an acquisition of honour; but on a gallows, it is horrid. It is meeting a fury--not a friend.

Are you indeed confident there is no future state?---No final Judgment?---No God?---No Devil?---No Heaven?---No Hell? That you have no soul, and that all will end with you when you die? But suppose you should be mistaken; What situation are you in then? To suppose yourself beyond the power of mistake, is to suppose yourself what no man besides is---Infallible. Have not men of superior learning and intellect, once believed as you do; and have they not changed their sentiments before they died? They lived the greatest Infidels: They died the strongest believers. Be honest, and say if this sentiment be not more the object of your wish, than of your faith? Is there no monitor within tells you, that you are Immortal? Assures you that you have a Soul? That it is appointed for man once to die; and after that the Judgment?---I make my appeal at the tribunal of your conscience.---You know there is.---You know you carry conviction of the truth you oppose; But why oppose the truth, to which your conscience bears testimony? Why silence its voice? Why rather strangle

strangle this faithful witness, than suffer it to speak out? Why?—The reason is plain; because if these things be so, you perceive yourself to be in a most deplorable state; You see, if there be a God, you have offended him; If there be a future Judgment, you are unprepared for it; If you have a Soul, that soul is lost. These things afford you pain. Pain at all times is unwelcome to human nature. To avoid the pain, you shun the sentiment. The formation of your creed, is the destruction of your conscience. You act in a state of hostility to yourself; and force yourself to deny, what you are constrained to believe. Were you to speak the language of your heart, you would say, “I would not have the Christian Religion to be true, for ten thousand worlds; for if it be, I am the most miserable of creatures.” But will your wishing it to be untrue, prove it to be so? On the contrary, Is it not almost a demonstration of its truth? Think then, I beseech you, what is the dreadful alternative!—Do not be afraid to look your situation in the face; for remember, you can acquire no advantage by deceiving yourself, but an essential injury. Is it not far better to know your danger when there is a probability of escaping it, than to persevere blindfolded to destruction? You are not unwilling to look upon yourself as a condemned person, after what has passed in a Court of Justice; and you act properly in so doing: Who can tell? This may ultimately

timately prove beneficial, it may excite you to apply for a pardon; and should that be obtained, you will have reason to be thankful for knowing your real situation; notwithstanding that knowledge has been a source of temporary distress. Why then should you be unwilling to see yourself as you are before God? A rebel against him—A transgressor of his law—An heir of wrath—A child of misery. What though this discovery of yourself should make you tremble, are you in a better condition if you do not? Will your insensibility preclude your danger? Will it not rather be insured thereby? You will apply for mercy, only as you see and feel your misery; and that mercy will be obtained, but as you are enabled to seek it.

I am Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

IN the Letter I sent you yesterday, I said there had been men of superior learning and intellect, who were once the greatest infidels, who have with abhorrence renounced their infidelity, and died the strongest believers. I mention this as no small confirmation that the Christian Religion is true. I am more disposed to lay considerable stress on this, because many persons of your description, have not the benefit

benefit of a liberal education; and have but seldom applied their minds to the study of Religion: Hence it is, they plead the example of the great, and the noble, who espouse the cause of infidelity, as full proof that Religion is a farce, and that Eternity is a bugbear. I will not content myself with bare assertion, I will give you an instance or two.

The late Lord P——, turned Deist, that is, he denied the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures; his enmity to the Bible was in the extreme. Upon his death bed, he found no consolation, either in his conduct or in his principles, but was full of horror in the prospects of futurity. While thus agitated, he desired a person to go into his library, and fetch the cursed book which perverted him to Deism. At first it could not be found, but he declared he could not die until it was destroyed. At length the book was brought, and with a mixture of revenge and horror, he tore it in pieces, and committed it to the flames.

Here you have one instance out of many, that infidelity leaves the soul destitute in the trying moment; so far from administering support in the solemn season of death, it fills the mind with inexpressible anguish. He who was taught by his creed, to laugh at all that was serious, and to brave death and hell, was in a state of distraction when the king of terrors made his appearance,

and pointed him to Eternity. Such will be the situation, yea, worse if possible, of all who dare deny the God that made them.-- That there is a God, and a righteous one, shall be the acknowledgment of every infidel in death, or in Hell. He shall find himself exposed and tormented here or hereafter, let his rank, fortune, or parts be what they may.

The second, is the late Earl of Rochester, than whom no greater infidel ever existed. He not only denied the Being of a God,—the Immortality of the Soul,—and the Existence of a Future state, but he exceeded in acts of immorality, and gloried in his superior vice. He exerted all his powers in the cause of impiety, and was but too successful in gaining converts to the Devil. So exceedingly vitiated was his lordship in his taste, to use the strong expression of an Author, "He raked the very bottom of the jakes of debauchery." As he was remarkable for sin, so he was for repentance. He lived to see the blasphemy of his system, and to tremble for its consequences. What invectives against himself did he use when he saw and felt his guilt. He frequently called himself "An ungrateful dog—The vilest wretch the sun shined upon." He wished he had been a "crawling leper in a ditch—a link boy—a beggar--or had lived in a dungeon, rather than offend God." He often used to say, "Can there be mercy and pardon for me ?
Will

Will God own such a wretch as I? Shall the unspeakable joys of Heaven be conferred on me? Oh mighty Saviour! never, but through thine infinite love and satisfaction! Oh! never but by the purchase of thy blood!" He spared no pains in attempting to counteract the poison of his tenets and conduct. What faithful and thundering messages did he send to his companions in sin! One day a gentleman of his acquaintance, who had been leagued with him in iniquity, came to visit him, to whom he thus addressed himself. "Oh remember that you condemn God no more! He is an avenging God, and will visit you for your sins; and will, I hope, in mercy touch your conscience, as he has done mine. You and I have been Friends and Sinners together a great while, therefore I am the more free with you. We have been all mistaken in our conceits and opinions: our persuasions have been false and groundless; therefore God grant repentance." And seeing the same gentleman the next day, he said, "Perhaps you were disobliged by my plainness with you yesterday: I spake the words of truth and soberness; and striking his hand on his breast, added, I hope God will touch your heart."

The limits of my Letter will prevent any addition to the above, I must therefore subscribe myself,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER V.

THE Earl of Rochester desirous of making all the reparation of which he was capable, to those whom he had injured by his principles and practices, published the following recantation of his error:—A recantation which at once evinces the sincerity of his conversion to the truth, and stands as a swift witness against all who are led away with the error of the wicked.

“For the benefit of all those whom I may have drawn into sin by my example and encouragement, I leave to the world this my last declaration, which I deliver in the presence of the great God, who knows the secrets of all hearts, and before whom I am now appearing to be judged.”

“That from the bottom of my Soul, I detest, and abhor the whole course of my former wicked life; that I think I can never sufficiently admire the goodness of God, who has given me a true sense of my pernicious opinions and practices, by which I have hitherto lived without God in the world; have been an open enemy to Jesus Christ, doing the utmost despite unto the Spirit of Grace. And that the greatest testimony of my charity to such, is to warn them in the name of God, as they regard
the

the welfare of their immortal souls, no more to deny his Being, or his Providence, or despise his goodness: no more to make a mock of Sin, or condemn the pure, and excellent Religion of my blessed Redeemer, through whose merits alone, I, one of the greatest of sinners do yet hope for mercy and forgiveness. Amen.

Declared and signed in the
Presence of

ANNA ROCHESTER,
ROBERT PARSONS.

} J. ROCHESTER?

Had I time, and you inclination, and were it necessary, I would lead you from death-bed to death-bed. I would take you to some chambers, where I would shew you a spectacle, that should harrow up your very soul, and make your hair stand erect: Where you might learn--that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God--that death is armed with ten thousand terrors to the ungodly--that the pains of hell are intolerable. I would then conduct you to the abodes of the just, and shew you a good man amidst all the transport of triumphant death:--I would say to you, "See here substantial proof, that Religion is a glorious reality." But I forbear--I am informed, "If you hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will you be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."*

Should you die an infidel as you are, I for ever despair of your salvation.

Yours, &c.

LETTER

* Luke xvi. 31.

LETTER VI.

IT is not improbable, that my last arrow has fallen short of the mark. You have escaped the blow by shifting your ground. You have said within yourself, "I am no Infidel, I deny not the existence of divine Revelation, or of a future world. I believe both. I believe I have an immortal soul, and notwithstanding my present situation, I hope it will be saved. I am condemned it is true, for breaking the laws of my country; but as this is the only instance in which I have offended God or man: I hope God will have mercy on me, and not be strict to mark this my iniquity."

Did I not hear this language from such lips as yours, I could not believe it possible, that a malefactor should embrace such a sentiment. I could not even suppose, so much ignorance should be discovered in a person born in a Christian country. What! Offend God but once?—And a man too condemned to die, because unfit to live! Is this probable?—Take a survey of your past conduct; compare that conduct with God's law, the Ten Commandments, that eternal rule of rectitude, as recorded in the xxth chapter of Exodus, by which our actions are to be regulated now, and examined at the last day. Measure yourself by this standard,

standard, and you will find you have "sinned and come short of the glory of God." Weigh yourself in this balance, and then read the hand-writing against the Wall, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."*—If an Apostle once acknowledged, "In many things we all offend,"† think what ought to be your confession:—To speak plain, your whole life has been one continued scene of rebellion against God.

Admitting this to be the only time in which you have broken both the law of God and man: You find the circumstance of having transgressed only once, did not prevent your condemnation at the tribunal of your country. Why then expect Justification at the tribunal of Heaven? Is it not well known, so as to become proverbial, that one leak will sink a ship, as well as one thousand? And has not the word of God asserted, "He who offendeth in one point, is guilty of the whole?"* One transgression of the law of God, will equally involve a man in its condemnatory sentence, as the greatest number: for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."† Should you therefore urge at the bar of God,

* Dan. v. 27. † James ii. 10. ‡ Gal. iii. 10.

God, you have been guilty only of one act of disobedience, divine justice would whet his glittering sword, and swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." It appears to me, you are wholly ignorant of the nature of God's law. You think that because you have never been guilty of any immoral act, except that for which you are to die, (which by no means is credible) You are constituted righteous. But be assured this is not the case. I hesitate not to affirm, there is not one sacred command of all the ten, which you have not broken, and that repeatedly. "How? (say you) before this I never committed Murder,—nor Adultery,—nor Theft,—nor any of those immoralities forbidden by the law."—I am willing to admit, you have never been guilty of the act; but know you not, that the law is so spiritual, as to extend to the Thoughts, and intents of the heart, as well as to the actions of the life? So that an impious thought, or an irregular passion, as much partakes of the nature of sin, as the most flagrant conduct. In this the law of God differs from that of man; the one takes cognizance of actions only, the other of both thoughts and actions. If you have never stolen from your neighbour, yet have coveted his property; you are guilty of theft in the sight of God. If

* Ezek. xviii. 4.

you

you have only "looked upon a woman to lust after her, you have committed adultery with her already in your heart."* If you have been "angry with your brother without cause, or have hated him, you are a murderer, and are in danger of hell-fire; for no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."† Here then, you see, the mirror of God's law will shew you sins which have been for ever concealed from your view. Look into this *glass* and you will behold infinite numbers make their appearance. See! the little one is become a thousand—The cloud no larger than a man's hand, increases and fills the horizon.—Your guilt is enormous! Enough to sink millions of worlds!—You have waged war with *Heaven*, and you are making your bed in *Hell*.

Yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

IT is not uncommon for persons in your situation, to comfort themselves with the consideration, their *sufferings* will make atonement for their *sins*: They think, as they have offended God by their conduct, he will be appeased by their death:—That their punishment inflicted by justice is satisfactory to its demands; and that after having endured so much in this world,

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* Matt. v. 52. † Matt. v. 21, 22. & 1 John iii. 15.

they are not liable to suffer in that which is to come.

Whether this is an article of your creed, you are best able to say.—I draw the bow at a venture; may God direct the arrow!

I feel no difficulty in acknowledging, your death partakes of the nature of atonement: I mean as it relates to man; that is, as you are punished by the law of man which you have broken, it is reasonable to suppose, your punishment bears proportion to your crime; as such, human justice is satisfied, and has no further demands. But you will remember, you have not only sinned against *man*, but against *God* also; and that though human justice may be satisfied by your corporeal punishment, yet divine justice has claims peculiar to itself. Now there is nothing in the nature of your sufferings, which can satisfy those claims; inasmuch as there is disproportion between your crime committed against God, and your punishment inflicted by man. Sin being an infinite evil, requires infinite atonement: which no one can make except he be an infinite person, such as the *Saviour*. The sufferings of the damned are eternal; because finite creatures as they are can never atone for an offence which is infinite. If therefore your sins are atoned for by suffering, it cannot be by any of which you can be the subject. A thousand deaths on earth, and an eternal one in hell, are by no means an adequate punishment for that evil which is infinite. Painful

Painful reflection! You must suffer both the vindictive justice of man, and also that of Almighty God! Unhappy Soul! Thy doom is peculiarly distressing! Scenes of complicated woe surrounds thee, there is no human sorrow like unto thine. Oh! that thou hadst never been born! That thou hadst never been left of God! Or rather that thou hadst never forsaken him! "It is an evil and bitter thing to forsake me, and that my fear is not in thee saith the Lord".* "We know the beginning of sin (saith one) but who knoweth its end". Alas! You have tasted its sweet, you are now drinking its bitter. Its honey has been palatable; but its sting has proved fatal. May Heaven compassionate thy case, and pluck thee as a brand from the burning! The fiercest flames await thee,—the most unheard of tortures are in reserve for thee—My heart bleeds at the prospect—Oh! that God may shew mercy, though it be at the last hour! and say, "Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom."†

With these expressions of compassion, and concern, I subscribe myself,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

AS soon as you read my last address to you, I think I heard
C 2 you

* Je. ii. 19.

† J. b xxxiii. 24.

you say, "I thank you sir, for your concern, and compassion, but you are greatly mistaken in the views you have formed of me. Although I am in a state of condemnation, it is unjustly ; I am no more guilty of the crime laid to my charge, than you are ; God is my witness. There has been one continued mistake in my trial. The whole court have erred. Judge—Jury—Witnesses—Prosecutor—Council—All. However, I heartily forgive them ; I am not willing to impute any thing wrong to their motives ; I can only say I die an innocent man. As the case thus stands, I hope you do not conceive I have that ground for alarm, which I should have were I guilty.

That you die an innocent man is distressing indeed ; for what so abhorrent to the feelings of humanity as the sacrifice of innocence ? Yet it is a circumstance which must alleviate your sorrow, and bear you up in some measure under your amazing pressure. You do well to impute nothing wrong to the motives of those who sat in judgment on you ; for though our privilege as Englishmen, of Trial by Jury be equal to any nation besides ; yet such is the fallibility of the human character, that the wisest of men are liable to mistake ; and such the imperfection of human institutions that the best are subject to defect. If it were possible for human nature to be so far depraved, as for the sake of filthy lucre—or from the principle of revenge—or from any other motive, except that of justice, to seek
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the blood of a fellow-creature, it is even then far better to be the persecuted, than the persecutor. God is the judge of the whole earth, he taketh account of all human affairs; he hath said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay it."* Divine judgment is sure to overtake guilt: if not in this world it will assuredly in the next. There is a tribunal where all must stand to "receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether they be good or bad."† You do well therefore to leave your cause in the hand of him who is a friend to the oppressed, and an enemy to the oppressor.

But while you rejoice, in the consciousness of innocence, under accusation of the foulest crime, I fear lest you are led to make this the alone foundation of your hope. You say you are innocent of the crime laid to your charge. Be it so. But do you forget there are *sins* which you have committed, and that when you die, you will appear before the *judgment seat of Christ* to give an account of *them*? What and if it should be found these sins are unpardoned? Will they not as much expose you to final condemnation, as even *this*, supposing you had been guilty of it? The innocency of your death, will by no means be a purgation of your general guilt. For though you die a martyr to villany or mistake, there is nothing in your death, which will render your *past sins* less aggravated than they were; or

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* Rom. xii. 19.

† 1 Cor. v. 10.

make atonement for their existence ;—or induce Almighty God to pardon them, as a reward for the wrong done you by the hands of man. No; you are still a *sinner*; that is your character; and in that character you must stand before the bar of your Maker. Your plea of suffering wrongfully will avail you not; as there will be charges brought against you; such as will be substantiated and brought home to your conscience, to which you must plead guilty; and for which you must suffer the just Judgment of *eternal vengeance*. It is your sin—your actual sin, which renders your situation insecure: for which nothing can atone, but a Saviour's death. I again subscribe myself,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

I TAKE my pen this day to make my appeal. I have great doubt whether I have done right in supposing your innocency as I did yesterday. Your conscience seated on its own tribunal, has either acquitted or condemned you. Shall I not presume from the legality of your trial, and the mass of evidence brought against you, that you are verily *guilty*. I will imagine therefore, you address me this day as follows. “As for my guilt, I have no difficulty

culty in acknowledging it. I am certainly the man,—the very man who has perpetrated the horrid deed for which I am in chains ;—I confess it both to God and man ;—I am exceeding sorry I ever did it ; however, I heartily repent of it ; I hope therefore it will be pardoned : for God has promised forgiveness where there is repentance.”

That God has promised forgiveness where there is repentance, cannot be denied ; but as every coin has its counterfeit : so has every grace. Thousands are deceived, believing they are the subjects of the one, when in reality they have only the other.—Let us for a moment examine the distinguishing features of true repentance, we shall then ascertain whether yours be that base counterfeit, which at last will be rejected ; or that coin of the kingdom which will pass current.

True repentance is generally considered as a sorrow for sin ; not so much on account of the misery it produceth, as an offence against that God, who is infinite in goodness, the essence of whose nature is love. I do not say a real penitent is not distressed because of misery produced by sin ; for there are seasons, when with the three thousand* he is pricked to the heart—when with the Publican,† he smites upon his breast,—and when with the jailor,‡ he trembles in an agony ; but this is not the alone,—the principal source of his sorrow ; a consideration

* Acts ii. 37.

† Luke xviii. 13

‡ Acts xvi. 19.

he has offended so holy, so good, and so gracious a God, as God his heavenly Father, stings him to the soul, and makes his very heart to bleed. This fills him with unutterable shame and confusion before God, and leads him to say, "Behold, I am vile."—I repent and abhor myself in dust and ashes".—"God be merciful to me a sinner."—"Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son; make me one of thine hired servants." An eminent author defines repentance to be "A tear of love in the eye of Faith." This definition indeed well accords with its nature. The prodigal's tear started amidst the embraces of parental affection. He was deluged with sorrow for the ungenerous returns he had made to the best of parents.

A believing view of a crucified Saviour also, gives being to this inestimable grace of the Spirit: Hence the prediction, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born". Mary wept amidst a profusion of divine love, when standing behind her dear master at his sacred feet; but when she stood before his cross, and saw him in all the agony of his death; the iron entered her soul, and her grief became excessive.

On Mount Calvary, the boundless love of God, and the infinite evil of sin are most

Zech. xii. 10.

strikingly

strikingly displayed, the former in stronger expression than the whole creation : the latter in more awful colours than the burnings of the damned. The believing soul gazing upon this stupendous exhibition, is overwhelmed with holy wonder.--He is fired with indignation against his sin.--He is melted down under a sweet sense of the dying love of Christ, in redeeming him from it--and from thence he receives strength, and vigour to overcome it: Therefore I am bold to affirm, that nothing less than living faith, in a dying Christ, will produce that repentance which needeth not to be repented of.

Now let me intreat you to lay your hand upon your heart, and ask yourself as in the presence of the all-seeing God, "What know I of this Repentance?---On what account do I sorrow for my sins in general; more especially for that in particular by which I am placed in this unhappy situation? Is it because thereby, I have offended God my heavenly Father, and pierced Jesus my blessed Redeemer? Or rather, is it not because it has brought me to an untimely end, and exposed me to everlasting misery? Let conscience speak, and it will give the following answer:--"Thou knowest, O soul, thou never hadst one generous pang from the reflection: Thou hast sinned against the greatest love and mercy.--Thou knowest thou art a stranger to Calvary, and the powerful impressions of dying love.--Thou knowest thou canst not look omniscience in the

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the face, and say, that sin is the object of thy greatest hatred.—Such the testimony of your conscience, and yet you talk of repentance, and cry peace unto yourself, under the idea, you are a penitent.—Awake from this dream—rouse from this slumber. You are in a state of deception, and danger. If alarm and fear constitute repentance, all Hell is in a state of repentance; yea, the devil himself is a penitent.—Were you now liberated from your present thralldom, would you not live in the habit of those vices, which have marked the whole of your life? Say.—Could you find it in your heart, to cut off your right-arm, or pluck out your right-eye sin? Would you not be ready to cry, Oh! Spare it! “Is it not a little one?” It is a beloved, a darling.” Take away the prison, and remove the gallows, it is more than probable, but you will tread in the very same path which has conducted you to both. It is *your prison*, not the *love of God*—*your gallows*, not the *cross of Christ*, which is the cause of your repentance.

But supposing your sorrow for sin to be after a godly sort, how exceedingly absurd, even then to make it the procuring cause of your pardon;—Do you reason so with respect to your offence against man? Surely you cannot imagine, that because you are sorry you have broken the laws of this realm, therefore you are deserving of the king's pardon. Your absurdity appears greater yet, in depending upon repentance, when alas! you have it not.

Revolve

Revolve these thoughts in your mind,
and may God give them their due effect.

Yours, &c.

LETTER X.

AWFUL is that character, the prophet describes, "A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say is there not a lie in my right hand."* How often is that character exhibited on a bed of death, and at a place of execution! Many poor creatures launching into eternity, have been heard to say, "I die in peace with all men,---I heartily forgive mine enemies,---I thank God, I have a good heart notwithstanding all my past faults.--I bear no malice to any one, no not to my prosecutor.--As I forgive others, I hope to be forgiven myself; so I am taught to believe from the Scriptures.

In such persons the Prophet's description is exemplified. They are indeed deceived; a lie is in their right hand, and they know it not.---Whether this is your language and conduct, you are most competent to determine. I will not take upon me to declare these have not been your prevailing sentiments during your imprisonment.

* Isaiah xlv, 20.

sonment, Yes, I will say to you, as Nathan did unto David, "Thou art the man." I consider you as the very person thus deceived. I am called upon therefore, in duty to cry aloud, and spare not,--to convince you, that you are under the power of delusion---that you are in extreme danger This I shall attempt, by shewing first you really do not forgive your enemies as you suppose you do ; and secondly, if you did, it could not be meritorious of divine forgiveness, as you imagine it could be.

The first proposition is, you do not forgive your enemies as you suppose you do. this will appear, if you consider no one unrenewed by the Grace of God, is capable of this conduct. Do you enquire how I prove this ? I answer by shewing what is included in the act of forgiveness. It is not only a backwardness to injure ; but also a forwardness to do good. In a word, to love our enemy as our neighbour, is to love him as ourselves. But has an unrenewed person capacity for this ? He is represented in Scripture, as under the influence of enmity, in relation to man his fellow-creature, as well as to God his Creator. So the Apostle Paul speaks in one place, "The carnal mind is enmity against God."* and in another, "They are hateful and hating one another."† Such the characteristic of human nature, even enmity itself. Is it possible then, a man unrenewed can love, I mean

* Rom. viii. 7.

† Titus iii. 3.

can love his enemies? It is possible indeed there might be affection for relatives and friends, where there is nothing more than nature; but love to enemies, is a grace of the Spirit, which no one can communicate but the Holy Spirit.—A spiritual act, which no one can perform but a spiritual person. Hence the necessity of being renewed by Divine Grace, before there can be the exercise of this gracious disposition.—Let this be applied—Ask yourself this question;—Have I been thus renewed? There can be no difficulty in giving an answer—You know you never have.—I leave you to draw the conclusion.—You do not forgive your enemies as you suppose you do.

I request your patience, while I observe the *second* proposition appears to be unnecessary; for if it be impossible for you so to love your enemies as to forgive them, you can have no hope of divine acceptance upon that ground; but suppose you had capacity for, and actually had exercised this *christian grace*, even then to make this the matter of your confidence, is to build without foundation.—The statement shall be thus: To forgive injuries, is a spiritual act, which no one can perform, but a spiritual person; That person must be in a pardoned state, or he is not. That he is, no one will deny; the question is then, When did he obtain this blessing? Was it before, or after he had per-

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formed this duty? From Scripture we can prove it was before;—the deduction is obvious—the *duty* did not procure the *blessing*; or to make it more plain, God does not forgive us our sins, because we forgive our fellow-creatures their trespasses against us.

Say you, how then am I to understand our Saviour, when he informs us, “Except we forgive our brother his trespasses against us, our Heavenly Father will not forgive us our trespasses against him;”* and also, when he taught his disciples to pray to be “forgiven, even as they forgave?” I answer, the design of our Lord is to shew, that a disposition to forgive injuries, and love enemies, is a blessed evidence of pardoned sin, not the meritorious cause of it.

You see then on what a nothing you depend; for in the first place, you have not what you suppose you have; and in the next place, were you in the possession of it, it would avail you not.

Are these things so? “Awake thou that sleepest,—arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”†—No longer make lies your refuge. Say “is there not a lie in my right-hand?” Beware then how you carry that lie to the bar of God. It will prove your overthrow there.—Tremble to retain it one moment longer.—It is sure delusion, sure destruction.

Yours, &c.

* Matt. xviii. 35

† Ephes. v. 14

LETTER XI.

THESE Letters I doubt not will exercise your patience, as well as try your religion. To be suspected of a false Religion, or convicted of having none, is enough to rouse the choler of any, where real religion has no influence.—I should not wonder, if you were to express yourself with some degree of warmth, thus, “You seem to address me, as though I were no Christian; but a Jew,—a Turk,—a Pagan. Is not this insulting to the last degree? But know sir, you are mistaken in the man, —I am a Christian, I consider myself as much so as you are, or any other person living; for I was regularly christened by the Minister of the Parish when I was an infant. I am confident I shall go to Heaven when I die, for my Bible tells me, “Except a man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* And my Catechism assures me, “I was made in Baptism a Member of Christ,—a Child of God,—and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Be not offended with my faithfulness, as I can assure you, it is love to your immortal soul, which leads me to the exercise of it. I cannot suffer you to enter the presence of your Maker, without attempting at least,

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* John iii. v.

to shew you what is necessary for such an important step.—I cannot be an unconcerned spectator, while you are plunging into an abyſs of woe.—I feel my bowels yearn over you.—I muſt make ſome effort to ſave you. Regard then the ſincerity of my intention, and liſten with patience to the voice of truth and friendſhip.

That Baptiſm is a *divine ordinance*, I readily admit, and firmly believe; that it is the *new birth* I poſitively deny.—A moment's reflection, I think will convince you, it is not. Our Lord declared to Nicodemus, “Except a Man be born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” Now if to be baptized, is to be born again, all thoſe who are ſo baptized, will be ſaved; and all who are not will be loſt.—But what if inſtances can be brought, where there is reaſon to believe, perſons have been baptized, and yet not ſaved:—of perſons not baptized, and yet not loſt? What then will become of your ſentiment and of your confidence? We read of the *ſalvation* of the thief upon the croſs, but not of his *baptiſm*: We have no reaſon to ſuppoſe it; of the *baptiſm* of Simon Magus but not of his *ſalvation*; we have no reaſon to believe it.—You may be baptized, and re-baptized, and after all periſh.

To be born again, is to be the ſubject of a holy change wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God, and manifested in the life, by a conduct becoming the Gospel of Chriſt.

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This divine change or new birth, is frequently called in Scripture, Regeneration,--a Resurrection,--a New Creation--Terms which import there must be some one period in the sinner's life, in which his heart must be changed, and his conduct reformed ; in which he must see the *evil of sin*, and forsake it; the *beauty of holiness* and possess it :---in which there must commence a death to the one, and a life to the other.--In this manner have you been born again ? Your speech bewrayeth you. Your confounding baptism with the new birth : that "outward and visible sign, with the inward and spiritual grace ;" an external rite, with divine influence, too plainly discovers you have never been born again : for had you been experimentally acquainted with the fact, you could not have been a stranger to its nature.

Hear then that solemn word, by which your state will be everlastingly fixed, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but these words shall not pass away ; not one jot, not one tittle shall fail of their accomplishment.--As impossible for a sinner unborn of the Spirit, to enter Heaven, as for God to change ; or eternal truth to lie. "There shall in no wise enter into it, any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie ; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."†

* John iii. 3.

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† Rev. xxi. 27.

The necessity of being thus born again, is apparent; not only from the word which asserts there shall be no salvation without it, but also from the unsuitableness there is between the depravity of a sinner, and the holiness of heaven. It is an incontrovertible truth,—Suitableness is the foundation of enjoyment. There can be no happiness, where disposition does not accord with situation. Is it not so on earth? Will it not be so in heaven?—You have been far from being happy in the company of the saints, and in the service of God. You have not found it your highest felicity when reflecting on the holiness of God; and looking forward to the full fruition of his presence:—No; far, very far from it. The Saints company has been your burden,—the service of God has been your task,—and the holiness of God has been your hell. How is it possible then, you could have the enjoyment of heaven, without a suitable disposition? The sanctity of the place, and the impurity of your nature, would so ill accord, as only to prevent your felicity, and place you in a state of torment.

Such the nature, and necessity of the new birth.—How different this from the ordinance of baptism! The application of water to the body, can by no means effect a change in the soul. This can only be produced by the exertion of that power which created the world.

Is it not wonderfully strange, a man of your character should call himself,—a Member of Christ,—a child of God,—an inheritor of the Kingdom of heaven; and that from the bare circumstance of an early baptism? A man who is a liar,---a swearer,---a sabbath-breaker,---a whoremonger,---a thief,---a murderer! Such a child of God, was never known on earth, and never will be found in heaven. “Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

I HAVE been thinking if I could have conversation with you this day, what in all probability would be the subject. I have thought it not improbable, I should hear such language as the following. “From what you have advanced, I begin to have my suspicion.--I am almost afraid things are not exactly with me as they ought to be; nor even as I supposed them to be. However, I have to console myself

* 1 Cor, vi. 9, 10.

myself with this thought,--I will do all I can towards my salvation; and I hope God will do the rest. I am daily in the habit of attending to my prayers; and I hope before I die to receive the Holy Sacrament. By such conduct as this, surely I shall stand prepared for the execution of my sentence."

You say, you will do all you can towards your salvation; and you hope God will do the rest.--But before you can do any thing to purpose, God, by his Holy Spirit, must "Work in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure;* without whose influence, you can do nothing aright.---You seem to think, Salvation is to be obtained by your doings. An error this, as dangerous in its tendency, as specious in its appearance. Salvation is of Grace, not of Works. If ever you are saved. It must be by an act of sovereign Grace. It must be as a finner, unable to do any thing meritorious of the divine favour. You must disclaim all dependance upon your own doings, and trust wholly to the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the foundation of your justification before God.--Trusting to any thing you can do, in whole, or in part, will as much ruin your soul, as the greatest sin you can commit.

You are in the daily habit of attending to your prayers. So far you are to be commended. But what is the motive of such conduct? In what manner do you perform

* Ph l. ii. 13.

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this duty? What the motive? Is it simply to use the means God has appointed for the reception of the blessing? If so, it is an acceptable sacrifice;--Or is it with a view to merit it? if so, it is an abomination. What the manner? Do you pray with a form, or without one? If the former, take care, because you read certain words which have been arranged by another, that you do not rest satisfied under the idea you are a man of prayer. I do not say, a person who makes use of a form, does not pray; but this I say, there is a material difference between the form and power;---the expression and the essence. A desire of the heart, implanted by the Spirit, and regulated by the word, constitutes that effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man which availeth much, whether accompanied with expression or not: This will sometimes exist in a form, and as often out of it. Probably you have been worshipping God hitherto in the outer-court of the letter, and have never entered within the vail of the Spirit; To use your own expression, you have been only saying your prayers. You have solaced your conscience with the reflection you have said so many in the course of a day, And it is a thousand to one, if you have not thought thereby to compound with God for your sins; if not to make him your debtor. But if there should be no prayer in all that you have done?---If the whole of your conduct should be nothing more than

than one dull piece of formality? or one continued scene of hypocrisy, mocking God with the sound of your voice, and the motion of your lips, while your heart has been far from him? I say, if all this, and more than this can be proved, where then is the ground of your comfort?---Petitions coming from the heart, however few, or incoherent will find their way to the divine throne; while every thing short of this will terminate in sound, and evaporate in air.

You are looking forward to the time, when you shall receive the holy sacrament. You consider such an act, as the sealing of your salvation, and obtaining your passport from earth to heaven. This sentiment is a dangerous rock, against which many have been dashed, and broken in pieces;--a fatal opiate, which has thrown numbers of the human race into the profound sleep of death. Let me warn you of your dangerr.--Let me tell you your passport will fail you: There have been some who have tried the experiment before you,--They produced this certificate at the gate of heaven, but there was no admission; the disappointment was dreadful. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer, and say unto you, I know you not whence you are. Then shall ye begin to say, We have

have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are ; depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."* And this assuredly will be your case, if you depend upon the sacrament for salvation.

This sacred ordinance was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church, not for the purpose of giving a title to heaven ; but as a memorial of his death and passion, to be received by his own disciples for the establishment of their faith, and the increase of their holiness : " For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body ;"† Read this passage carefully. You see there is great danger of eating the sacramental bread, and drinking the sacramental wine unworthily ;---that the consequence

* Luke xiii. 25.

† 1 Cor. xi. 26.

quence of so doing is serious indeed ; no less than to be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and to eat and drink damnation to yourself. To be guilty of the blood of Christ ? What guilt is like unto this ? You have shed the blood of a fellow-creature, and you exclaim, “ My punishment is greater than I can bear.”* Think then what would be your language, had you shed the blood of the Saviour ! Would you not have trembled to have taken the spear from the hand of the soldier, and to thrust it into the heart of the Saviour ? And will you presume to take unworthily from the hand of his minister, the sacred symbols of his body and blood ; when an Apostle informs you, you are guilty of the body and blood of Christ in the one instance, as in the other ?—To eat and drink damnation ! What a dreadful meal is this ! Is not this the feast of the damned ? While you are found unworthy to communicate at the Lord’s Table, avoid it as you would taking poison, or filling a place in Hell.

You will naturally ask me, What is it to eat, and to drink unworthily ? I will tell you in brief.

First. It is to receive this ordinance in an unregenerate state.

Secondly. To partake of it as a common meal, not having faith to discern the Lord’s body.

And

* Gen. iv. 13.

And, Thirdly, to depend upon it as meritorious of Salvation.

Let me therefore, most earnestly beseech you, to touch not,---taste not,-- handle not, while you are an unregenerate person ;— while you are ignorant of the nature and design of this holy rite ;—while you are incapable of exercising faith in a dying Saviour. When indeed the scene is reversed;-- when old things are passed away, and all things become new ;---in a word, when you are made a new creature in Christ Jesus, then come forward in the name of your blessed Redeemer, take your place at his feast, and avow your dependance upon his death, for the remission of your sin, and your allegiance to him as your sovereign, by an obedience to his commands.

I deem it necessary to guard you against misapprehension, by the addition of an explanatory remark. When I say, the sacrament is unable to secure your salvation, I do not mean to detract from its dignity, because I believe it to be a *divine institution*, of the first magnitude : and when I say with the Apostle, “ He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself ;” I do not mean to add to its importance. Far be it from me to assert, such is the sanctity of the Lord’s Supper, as to render the salvation of that man impossible, who has received it in an impenitent state;-- not discerning the Lord’s body---or trusting

to it for his salvation: for if it were so, what would become of thousands in Christendom, who have thus communicated at the sacred table, of whose salvation there can be no doubt? My object is to shew, that a bare receiving of this ordinance without suitable qualifications, or with unsuitable views, is so far from being a virtue meritorious of the divine favour, is a sin of such aggravated nature, which if not repented of and washed in the blood of Christ, will expose the unworthy receiver to final condemnation, as it did some at Corinth to temporal judgment; and also prove to him a source of aggravated misery.

The great redeemer tells you, "Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee"*

Yours, &c.

LETTER XIII.

THE uncovenanted mercy of God, is one of the strongest holds, of which the sinner takes possession. This in general is the place of his abode; and to make him relinquish it is difficult indeed. In this strong hold I am about to look for you, and there it is I think I see you. I hear you say, "I acknowledge indeed I have done those things which I ought

* John v. 14.

ought not to have done, and I have left undone those things which I ought to have done.—I should be much disposed to feel alarm, did I not recollect God is a merciful Being; it is this which suppresses my fear, and encourages my hope. The attribute of divine mercy, is the foundation of my confidence.”

That God is merciful, is a blessed, and undeniable truth.—That he is just also, is a truth equally important and glorious.—That no one attribute can be displayed at the expence of another, is self-evident, and must be admitted by all. The Justice of God obliges him to the execution of his threatnings in the punishment of guilt; nor can the existence of his mercy prevent it. For mercy to set aside justice, would be to “maim heaven’s fair attributes—to make a God unjust,—to bid mercy triumph over God himself.” This cannot be, for the divine Being will always act consistent with his own nature. If He display the riches of his mercy, he will maintain the honour of his Justice. If then his mercy should pardon your sin, what will become of his justice in the punishment of your guilt; since the awful declaration is, “The soul that sinneth it shall die.”* In vain you oppose his mercy to your fear, while his justice can be opposed to your hopes. Do you say God is merciful? What will you say, when he informs you, He is also just? Your views

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* Ezek. xviii. 4.

are now directed to the sceptre, and you have wholly lost sight of the sword. Have you not more cause to fear the one, than to hope for the other? Innocence has indeed nothing to fear, but guilt has reason to tremble. If that law be just, which punishes rebellion with death, what has not that rebel to expect, who has attempted the dethroning of his sovereign? You will tell me his prince has power to dispense with the penalty of the law;—and the mercifulness of his disposition affords him at least a peradventure for hope.—That human laws are so framed as to vest the throne with authority to inflict or suspend their penalty, I know well; and I admire their structure, as it opens the door of mercy, without the sacrifice of justice. It is not necessary that the law of man should always require the punishment of disobedience to constitute it just; seeing the end of their institution is the prevention of crimes for the preservation of order, which is accomplished though there be occasional suspension of its penalty. But it is not so with the law of God. It is of such a nature as to demand death for every transgression, and this demand is sanctioned by the strictest principles of justice. Consequently not to punish guilt, must be an act of injustice.—But can he be unjust, the habitation of whose throne is righteousness and judgment?—The bare thought gives a shock to impiety itself. Yet shocking as the thought may be, would
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not, this be the case, if the penalty of the divine law were of none effect, in permitting any one sin to remain unpunished?—"What, (say you) do you wish me to understand God cannot shew mercy to a sinner?--This is a horrid doctrine indeed, enough to drive any man into despair, if not to deprive him of his senses.--My fellow-sinner, I wish you to understand this. As long as you are under the law, you are under its curse. And while under the curse, God will not,--He cannot (with reverence I write it) manifest his pardoning mercy to you. The question is therefore, "Is it possible for you as a sinner, to obtain mercy, when divine justice must receive satisfaction for the commission of your sin?"--An answer to this, would exceed the bounds of this letter. I shall therefore present you with it in my next. In the mean time endeavour to acquaint yourself with the import of this question, and give it all that attention its importance requires.--Pass not over it lightly.--Be concerned to receive the fullest information upon this subject, that you may be able to give a reason of the hope that is within you.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XIV.

TO shew the mercy of God is not a proper ground for a sinner's

ner's trust ; and to solve the apparent difficulty how God can display his mercy consistently with his justice, is the design of this letter. I will attempt the explanation by the following illustration.

We will suppose the law of this realm to be so absolute in its nature, as to require punishment for every act of disobedience either in the person of the transgressor, or in that of another who should suffer in his stead. And that our most gracious sovereign could not exercise his present prerogative of remitting the penalty of the law.—We will suppose such were existing circumstances, as to render this indispensibly necessary and strictly just. You as a subject of Great Britain, are under obligation to render obedience to this law. Through the depravity of your nature, and the power of temptation you have broken it.—Justice demands the fullest satisfaction.—The sentence of the law is passed.--You arrive at the place of execution :--You plead the merciful disposition of your prince. But this avails not. For however he may commiserate you as a man, he can afford you no relief as a magistrate.--At that all critical and interesting moment, should some person unknown to you, from the principle of affection for you, propose himself to die in your stead, and thereby atone for your transgression.--Should this proposal be accepted, your friend is executed and you are released.—Now tell me would there not
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be here a striking display of Justice, and also of mercy? Of justice in the punishment of the crime; of mercy in the sparing of the criminal; and in such a way, as reflects the highest honour on both.—Thus saved from death, would you ascribe the cause of your salvation to the mercy of your King, abstracted from, or unconnected with the death of your surety? Or rather would you not consider, the blood of your atoning friend as the procuring cause of your deliverance. Would you not make that the alone foundation of your hope? The king indeed has manifested his mercy by proposing a substitute to die for you, or accepting a proposal so made to him, (which he might have refused as a sovereign) but all that mercy flows to you through the channel of justice, and of that only.

Even so it stands with God and the sinner. Man is the object of God's moral government.—That is,—he is under peculiar obligation to obey the moral law.—Divine Justice has promised to reward obedience with Eternal life, and threatened disobedience with Eternal death.—We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God.—We are all in a state of condemnation.—There is no salvation from this state but by atonement for sin.—There can be no atonement but as the penalty of the law is inflicted.—A submission to the penalty is death.—We are unable therefore to deliver ourselves. And except some plan can
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be adopted, whereby the crime may be punished, and the criminal spared, we never can be saved.—Blessed be God, such a plan has been adopted. The Son of God has voluntarily assumed human nature, and become man. In this nature, he has obeyed the law we had broken, and suffered the penalty due to our transgression. This obedience and these sufferings, are by an act of sovereign Grace, transferred to the account of those who through faith make Christ the end of the law for Righteousness. So that they are redeemed from that death to which they were exposed by their sin; and placed in such a state of justification as though they had never committed sin. Because their Saviour has made atonement for them, they expect to be saved from everlasting misery, and to obtain everlasting happiness. They regard the cross as the only medium, through which mercy can come to poor sinful creatures, and they make it all their trust, and all their confidence.—To this great object direct your eyes, and raise all your expectations.—It is a tree of life, blessed are all they, who partake of its fruit. Again, I say, I am

Yours, &c.

LETTER XV.

IT is not impossible, these lines should find you in a state of contrition

trition for sin, and solicitude for your soul. —I think I have heard you this very day, bemoan yourself thus. “Oh wretched man that I am! I now begin to see, I have destroyed myself by my sin;—I have deceived myself in matters of religion. I have been building on sand;—Yea, I have made lies my refuge. The mercy of God indeed was my last resource,—my strongest bulwark; but even this fails me.—I am now destitute of refuge, and I know not where to fly.—My alarm increaseth with the discovery of my danger.—It is true the information I have received, that mercy can find its way to the sinner, consistent with Justice, affords me some consolation; but still I am in the dark with respect to the means of obtaining it.—I see the blessing, though I know not what step to take that I might possess it.—What must I do to be saved? Oh for mercy!—I fear I shall perish.”

Such language as this coming from your lips, gives me peculiar satisfaction. The distress you feel, and the concern you manifest, are favourable circumstances. A state of insensibility is a state of danger, but anxiety for the soul's salvation, furnishes matter for hope.

You are in the situation of one, who in a dark night, has fallen into deep waters, to whom a rope is thrown for his assistance, by the hand of his friend; He has only light sufficient to discover his friend, but not the rope. He sees only the person
of

of his deliverer; but not the instrument his deliverance. The one creates the dawn of hope; the other fills his mind with painful suspense. Amidst all the thick darkness which pervades you, a few rays of light make known your danger, and in the person of Jesus your Saviour; yet you are not sufficiently illuminated to see by what means you are to be saved.--- Listen then for a moment, while I attempt to shew you the way God has appointed for your salvation.

When the jailor at Philippi, asked the Apostle Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" (the very question you would propose to a Minister of Christ) He answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."* When our blessed Lord gave commission to his Apostles, "to go into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every creature;" he declared, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned."† It appears from hence, Faith in Christ, is essential to a sinner's salvation. You enquire, "What is Faith in Christ?" I answer, "It is a saving grace, whereby we receive, and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the Gospel.— Two institutions under the Old Testament dispensation will illustrate this subject, and explain my meaning..

The first, is that of the *brazen serpent* in the wilderness. The Children of Israel for
their

* Acts xvi. 30. 31.

† Mark xvi. 16.

their rebellion against God, were punished by him in the bite of certain fiery flying serpents. The wound they inflicted, always proved fatal, so that numbers fell victims to their sin. Amidst the general devastation with which the whole body of the Israelites were threatened, Moses receives instructions to make a Serpent of brass--to fasten it upon a pole--and to place it in the most conspicuous part of the camp.--He did so. --By virtue of divine authority, he then commanded all who were stung, immediately to look to this object--promised they should live who obeyed that command,--and threatened all with death who did not. It came to pass, as he said, so it was, all were preserved who embraced this remedy ; and all perished by whom it was neglected.

Our Lord himself explains this institution, " As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up ; that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." So that what a sight of the Serpent was to the body of the Israelite, that faith in Christ is to the soul of a sinner. In both there is a conviction of the danger, and an entire dependance upon the remedy.

Here then dying sinner is your only hope.---You have received a wound from the old Serpent the devil;--His venom is communicated

communicated to your blood, and spreads itself through the whole mass.--You feel the alarming symptoms of approaching death.--Your whole man quakes for fear.--Permit me then to take you by the hand, and lead you to Calvary.--I lift the rod of the Gospel, and point you to yonder cross.--Seest thou him who is crucified between two thieves?--This is "the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Raise thy dying eyes, and eagerly fix them on this thine only antidote of death.--Look dying sinner and live.

The second institution is that of the cities of refuge.--When any man had killed his neighbour unawares, the next a-kin to the deceased, was at full liberty to avenge his death by destroying the manslayer.--As a merciful provision, the Lord appointed six cities, to any one of which the murderer might flee, and be safe from the avenging sword.

Let the murderer be an emblem of yourself; a Sinner.--The Avenger of Blood, Vindictive Justice.--The Cities of Refuge, the Lord Jesus Christ.--And the Flight of the Refugee, the application of of the Sinner by faith to the Saviour.

This Levitical law, as explained upon evangelical principles, will afford you additional ideas of the nature and necessity of faith. As you will understand this subject better by an application of it to yourself, I will consider you as that very man

man, who has shed the blood of your neighbour.---The avenger of blood is at your heels, and the cry of blood is in your ears.--The flaming sword waves over your guilty head.---every moment you expect the vengeful stroke.--You are at your wits-end; you know not what to do. You look this way and that, but all in vain, there is no escape.--You begin to run, but alas! you know not where--you stop--but immediate danger rouses to flight--You fly--Still the sword is at your heels, and the sound is in your ears.--At length, you abandon yourself to despair, and cry, "Woe is me, for I am undone."

We are informed, that for the benefit of Refugees, directing posts were erected in different roads, pointing to the city of refuge, with this inscription, "*Refuge! Refuge!*" What those directing posts were to the Refugee, that the Gospel is to the sinner--to you.--It is therefore, to this sacred index I call your attention; its language is Refuge, and its bearing is Jesus. It gives you the fullest information that the Saviour is your sanctuary, and that faith is the immediate, the only road which conducts you to him.--Come then poor soul, here is good news for thee. An asylum is provided, to which thou mayest flee and be safe. Thither direct thy trembling steps,--"Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed,*---Where
F justice

* Gen. xix. 17.

justice cannot pursue thee—Where the Law cannot condemn thee—Where Satan cannot destroy thee—Make application to him who is able to save.—Throw thyself all guilty as thou art before the footstool of his mercy.—Tell him, your object is life and salvation.—Tell him, you can take no denial from his lips.—Tell him, you are resolved if you must perish, there to die.—Rest assured of a gracious reception, and merciful protection. No one ever fled to him, and fled in vain.—It is faith in the Lord Jesus, and that alone which secures you amidst danger; the smallest degree of which, saves you from Hell, and takes you to Heaven.

That you may die a believer, is and shall be the fervent prayer of Yours, &c.

LETTER XVI.

I SUPPOSE the following to be your lamentation. “Oh that I could look to Christ, and flee to him by faith! But my sins are so great, and my guilt so aggravated, I am afraid I never can be saved.—I am the chief of sinners—I have taken the lead in vice—I am a monster of iniquity—I deserve the lowest, the hottest hell—I expect an uncommon damnation.—Oh! my heart will burst.—Oh that I had never been born.—Most wretched of beings!—A wounded spirit who can bear?—Where shall I flee?—What shall I do?—

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There can be no hope for such a sinner as I. Mercy itself will not--cannot pardon such guilt as mine."

To such distressing language as this, let me oppose the gladdening accents of the Gospel.--Hear its charming voice.---"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."* "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins."† "He is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."‡ "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief (saith Paul)."[§] "While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."[¶] "The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."|| "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon."** Jesus stood and cried, if any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink."^{††} "And the spirit and the bride say come; and let him that heareth say come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the
F 2 water

* John iii. xvi.

† I John iv. 10.

‡ Rom. iii. 26.

§ I Tim. i. 15.

¶ Rom. v. 6.

|| I John i. 7.

** Isaiah lv. 7.

†† John vii. 37.

water of life freely.* “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, Yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.”† “Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”‡ “All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”§ “Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he everliveth to make intercession for them.”||

Such is the lovely song the Gospel sings, in this our wilderness. Disconsolate soul, let your complaints cease. Listen to the voice of this charmer. It will soothe your every sorrow, and fill you with all the transport of heaven.---Your salvation so far from being impossible, is highly probable; As a sinner it is true you are in deplorable circumstances; but as a sinner made sensible of his sin and misery, “The shadow of death is turned into the light of the morning.” You despair of pardoning mercy, because of the magnitude

* Rev. xxii. 17. † Isaiah. lv. 1. ‡ Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30.

§ John vi. 37. || Heb. vii. 25.

tude of your guilt. But do you not read of the greatest sinners being saved?—What think you of Manasseh, who deluged the streets of Jerusalem with innocent blood.* Of Saul of Tarsus, who breathed slaughter and death against the followers of Christ.† Of a Mary Magdalen, out of whom were cast seven devils?‡—Time would fail, or it would be easy to swell the list of those who have exceeded their fellow-creatures in sin;—who have fled for refuge to the only hope set before them in the Gospel;—and who have obtained mercy and found grace to help in time of need. These are recorded, that in them “Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life.”§

Surrounded as you are with a great cloud of witnesses, who all bear testimony to the willingness and ability of Christ to save sinners; behold one, whose character and circumstances bear a strong resemblance to your own: I mean the thief upon the cross. In that man, were combined the thief and the robber. Dropping into the jaws of death, he cried to him who was expiring on an adjacent cross, and “He was heard in the thing that he feared.” An arm was stretched forth which brought salvation.—He was delivered from going down into the pit;—and he who deserved the lowest hell, was raised

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* 2 Kings xxi. 16. & 2 Chron. xxxiii. 10, 11, 12, 13.

† Acts xxvi. ‡ Luke vii. 36, &c. § 1 Tim. i. 16.

to the highest heaven. His prayer was, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom." His answer, "Verily Verily, I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." * Like yourself, this poor creature, had no goodness of which to make his boast; with you, he subscribed to the Apostles confession, "I am the chief of sinners;" and with the Apostle he obtained mercy. He was plucked as a brand from the burning — washed in the Saviour's blood, and cloathed in his righteousness. — He is now before the throne of God. And is not Jesus Christ the same "Yesterday, to-day, and for ever?" Is he not equally the friend of sinners now, as in the days of his flesh? Is he not as able to save you, as he was a Manasseh, — a Saul, — a Magdalen? Is there any thing more desperate in your case, than in theirs? I will take upon me to aver there is not: whatever Satan and unbelief may insinuate to the contrary. What sin have you committed so singular in its nature, which the blessed Jesus has declared shall never be forgiven, either in this world, or in that which is to come? What one blessing of all he has purchased by his blood, and revealed in his word, which he has denied you? Has he not given you the most generous invitations, and made you the most precious promises? Has he not commissioned his Ministers, to bring

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* Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

him the halt—the withered—the blind—the lost—the miserable? And are you not of this description?—Go then poor trembling soul with all thy fears and guilt;—go and fall prostrate at thy Saviour's feet. It is there where thousands have found mercy, and where mercy is in reserve for thee. Say not, "I am a great sinner." Is not Christ a great Saviour? Art thou lost to the uttermost? And is not he able to save to the uttermost?—Let there be no delay of application, it is dangerous in the extreme.---Let your constant and fervent cry be, "Lord save, I perish."---Give him no rest until he shall say to you, "Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." Do not be discouraged, if there should not be an immediate answer; though "The vision tarry, wait for it, in the end it will speak and will not lie." "He is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him." Let this be your firm and lasting resolution, "If I perish, it shall be at the foot of my Saviour's cross.---I will die trusting his grace.---His blood and righteousness shall be all my dependance, and all my refuge." In this way I intreat you to meet death and judgment; in this way, I mean trusting in Jesus, some who have suffered death in the same ignominious circumstances as yours, have, when standing on the confines of the eternal world, raised their triumphant voice and sung,

"Yes, I'm secure beneath his blood,
 "And ll' my foes shall lose their aim,
 "Hosanna to my dying God,
 "And my best honours to his Name."

That these may be the last accents of your tongue on earth, and your everlasting strains in heaven, is the continued prayer of,
Yours, &c.

LETTER XVII.

AS the object proposed in these Sheets, is your salvation, and the important truths they contain are well adapted under God to promote it; let me intreat your greatest attention to them. Read them, or cause them to be read to you, until you understand their meaning, and feel their power.

Epistolary correspondence is too limited to convey full instruction; I request you therefore to desire some godly minister, or person to visit you during your confinement:--Such as know the truth as it is in Jesus, and have felt its energy upon their hearts;--Such as are qualified to explain to you how a sinner is justified before God by faith in Christ; and what that regeneration of the spirit is, without which, no sinner can enter the kingdom of heaven. You will receive greater advantage from the personal attendance of such, than from the performance of any pen;--If indeed, you are already favoured with the assistance of such visitors, either by the provision of the law, or by the compassion of friends; learn to estimate your privileges, and pray for grace to improve it. I re-

I recommend to you the reading of your Bible. Suffer no human publication to supersede the sacred volume. When man is your instructor, you are liable to be deceived, especially when his instructions are opposed to the doctrines of the Gospel, and unsanctioned by the Holy Scriptures; but there can be no danger of mistake, where there is implicit dependance upon divine truth.—You have but little time to live;—let a large share of this time be devoted to the Bible. Consider this blessed Book, as that by which, God is pleased to make sinners wise unto salvation;—as that by which you may know for a certainty, whether you will be lost or saved;—as that by which you will be judged at the last day;—take with you this thought—It is the word of the Eternal God, and if you neglect it, it is at your everlasting peril.

The best of means, are but means at best. Be earnest therefore at a throne of grace, for the teaching of God's Holy Spirit; without which, all means are used in vain. It is he who alone can teach you to profit;—who can renew you in the spirit of your mind;—who can manifest pardoning mercy to your soul;—who can in a word make you meet for heaven, and the enjoyment of God in Glory. Do not despair of receiving him, so as to prevent you from asking for him;—The Lord Jesus Christ has given you the greatest encouragement to do so, and to expect him as the consequence. “If ye being

evil

evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy spirit unto them that ask him."*

I must now take my final---probably my everlasting farewell of you---You will remember you have been warned of your danger, and admonished to flee from it; you have been informed of your remedy and exhorted to embrace it. Should you perish after all, "I am pure from your blood, for I have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God;---" "I have delivered my soul," "and your blood will be required at your own hands;---Your guilt will receive additional aggravation; and your punishment will be more intolerable. Should the Lord bless this feeble attempt, you will reap eternal benefit;---I shall receive unspeakable pleasure;---and the whole praise will redound to free and sovereign grace.

And now, my poor fellow-sinner, what shall I say,---what can I say more?---I can only add, may you be found in his hand, who is able to support you under all your approaching sufferings; "To save you to the uttermost," "And to present you faultless before the divine throne with exceeding great joy!" May the compassionate Saviour, shew you mercy in the suffering hour. And on the day of execution, say to you, as he did to the dying thief, "To day, shalt thou be with me in paradise." Like Stephen may
you

* Luke xi. 13.

you "Look up, and see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God," and with him, amidst all the violence of death, commit your soul into the hand of the Mediator, and say, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit!"—even so, Amen! and Amen!

For ever farewell.

Yours, &c.



COPY

COPY OF A LETTER,

FROM A

Physician in London,

TO THE LATE

Dr. DODD,

WHEN HE WAS UNDER SENTENCE OF

DEATH.

Dear Sir,

THE ways of God are in the Sea, and his paths in the deep waters, where human penetration can discover no traces of his goings. Who can assign a reason, why he is at such extraordinary pains to recommend the infinite glory and importance of his salvation to some, while he allows the prosperity of fools to destroy others, without interposing a check in their career.

God forbid, that I should attempt to flatter you, or to extenuate the guilt of sin, and frustrate the end of the divine law, which was added to set it forth in its true colours, and to make it appear exceeding sinful. — But my dear sir, it concerns you and me, to view sin in the light of that law, where they

who judge by the law of human society, and they who are judged, stand equally arraigned at an infallible tribunal.

When I must so discern, how can I make a difference between you, because of your sorrowful situation, and myself, or any other guilty creature, that they do in whose eyes human sanctions of the divine law, are the only standard of their judgment. I cannot therefore, address you as more guilty than myself. But permit me to do it, as to one whom it has pleased God, (for your infinite interest I hope) to alarm with a nearer and more awful prospect of the wages of sin, in order to recommend to you more warmly the gift of God, through Jesus Christ, even eternal life, with all its ever blooming felicities.

It is almost an universal error and misfortune of mankind, that we all persist in looking forward to that hour of eternal separation between us and our darling objects of momentary enjoyments, as a mere natural evil, which as we cannot avoid, we ought to drown the thoughts of, by one draught of sensuality or pursuit of sublunary views after another, till at an unexpected moment, we are absorbed into eternity. — May it not be intended, particularly (if I may so term it) for your peculiar happiness, (for God, and he only, has it always in his power to bring good out of evil, and sweetness out of bitterness) that you should not be

be permitted to finish your course here, under that dangerous and fatal deception that you should be forced to think of, and to meet death, not as a natural evil, but as the wages of sin, and inevitable consequences of that corruption from which every act of it proceeds. Happy would it be for the gay and unthinking, who reflect not on the consequences of their pursuits; happy would it be for us all, if, from a contemplation of your circumstances, we felt the same impression which the Author of eternal salvation made the accusers of the woman taken in adultery to feel. May he also, my dear sir, make you feel all the comforts of that joyful absolution, which none but the Author of Salvation can pronounce upon the self-condemned criminal.

May you be filled with the joy, which no man can take from you, of believing that his love, his ability, and his willingness to save, is the same now, as what it was seventeen hundred years ago. Adore that constitution of salvation, which can render the victims of sin, more than conquerors over him by whose arm they must fall, and which can render them sharers in the triumph, and dividers of the spoil taken in the battles they never fought. — You were immoderately ambitious. — I grant it, — and as criminally in the sight of God before as now, when you find the most bitter and afflictive effects of it. But now you have little concern with

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the world's view of the circumstances your ambition has brought you into; it has hurried you to the borders of a world of realities. While you were (in order, I hope, to give the concerns of that world a due magnitude and importance in your eyes) keenly pursuing the transient shadows of time, a more awful and infinitely nobler prospect has unexpectedly opened full upon you. There you may give your ambition infinite latitude and scope. Guilt does not forbid it, "*He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.*" His death, not the manner or mode of our paying that debt, that is the evidence of our guilt; but it is the death of Jesus Christ, not our own death, that is the measure and standard of our guilt. There is not a mode, there is not a degree of wretchedness, that ever sinners plunged themselves into, that he did not assume our nature for the sake of feeling, not only sympathetically, but for the sake of groaning under himself, as constitutionally subjected to all the miseries the law of God has entailed upon whoever is found in the likeness of sinful flesh, and dependent on nature, that system which mankind has chosen for their portion, and prefer to God himself. This is great beyond conception, indeed; but is this all? No; sustaining all

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the anguish that guilt could entail upon human nature, it called forth, and displayed in him all the purity and perfection, it became the occasion and means of exerting all the righteousness, that human nature, in union with divinity, and animated by its resplendency could produce. The sufferings that belonged to sin, became the soil out of which eternal righteousness generated, and grew to infinite perfection.

Righteousness destined to be the animating beams, the eternal life, the celestial food, the glorious robe, of whom? Of those who are by nature heirs of wrath. Can we look upon this system of salvation, as less than infinite, in its motives of love to the miserable, infinite in its execution. — when we find it so infinite in its ends, to make the heirs of wrath, heirs of God himself! All the felicity, all the delights, all the worlds that God can create, he has thought to small a portion for them, whose misery has interested him in their salvation. His executive power can call into being, an endless succession of delights; but these he makes no account of, they are all nothing, while he knows he can carry their happiness still higher. The infinite donor has given himself to be the inheritance of them, who were not worthy of the smallest of his creatures: Yet it must be so; the thought is wholly divine, it is too vast to originate any where else, but in the heaven of heavens. Who could

could have projected it but God? who was determined to astonish the most miserable, into a belief; into an impossibility of continuing to discredit, or dispute the infinite largeness of his grace. This is the ancient immutable promise of God confirmed by his death. That promise of life, (*Titus* i. 2.) that purpose of grace given us in Christ, (*2 Tim.* i. 9.) before the world began, which no subsequent law can make void. Look not then on Mount Sinai, on the tremendous promulgation of the law, the awful pomp of its command, and the inflexible severity of its sanction. All its terrors cannot shake or make the promise void, nor can all its thunders drown the loftier and more ravishing melody of its voice. The heir of the promise was made under the law for us, but now he reigns the glorious administrator of all the riches of the promise, to all that believe on his name, and set to their seal that God is true. My dear sir, the duration of the world, and the capacity of a seraph, would be insufficient to disclose all the glory and enjoyments comprehended in the promise of God. But they who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and rely on the divine veracity, are in the possession of the whole infinite treasure. No matter, though they should not have one day, or one hour in time, to examine the extent of their charter. They shall have a glorious eternity for the discovery and enjoyment



joyment of their infinite treasure ;—and less would be insufficient to acquaint them with the extent of their wishes.

Dear sir, if your mind is not pre-occupied by still more just, solemn, and important views of what relates to your present circumstances, perhaps these thoughts may assist you in making a true estimate of your loss, how insignificant ; and of your gain, how immense ! By embracing the happy alternative, in exchange for a life at best but forfeited, and which we must one day resign, in execution of the sentence passed upon all men, may you feel and enjoy your present doom, as the æra of your eternal prospects of immortality in Jesus Christ ! May your mind be guarded, and supported by him who is able to save to the uttermost, because he ever lives, and that God may eternally bless you, is the most fervent prayer of an unworthy but sympathizing fellow-mortal.



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